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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

May 2, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local/Private Elementary School and Public School Academy Principals

FROM: Betty Underwood, Interim Director
Office of School Improvement

SUBJECT: 2008-2009 Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary Schools Program

The Michigan Department of Education is pleased to announce the 2008-2009 Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary Schools Program (elementary cycle). This marks the program's 26th year of recognizing highly effective schools throughout the state. This award program is open to both public and private schools that meet extremely high standards and undergo a rigorous peer review. In order to qualify, public schools selected for the "Exemplary School" award must also earn either an A or B under *Education Yes!* and have achieved AYP for the school year ending 2007-2008.

There are two very good reasons why a school building should consider this process:

1. Self-reflection: Research in the area of school improvement has shown that schools with a common vision are successful in increasing student achievement. The Blue Ribbon process is very effective in assisting schools to focus their efforts and vision.
2. Recognition: The program is designed to provide program analysis, a peer review, and an on-site visitation at no additional external cost to the district. Furthermore, selected school buildings receive state recognition for their efforts.

The major components that qualify a school for state recognition are: (1) that the school staff has developed a number of exemplary programs and (2) the school's performance indicates success.

For your assistance, the 2008-2009 Elementary School Nomination Requirements, the updated timeline, and the current contact information for the Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee members are provided on the Blue Ribbon web page at the following link:
http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_30334-106934--,00.html.

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A DVD regarding the application process will be sent once a written "Intent to Apply" is received (refer to page iv in the application for more information). For additional support during this application process, please contact members of the Blue Ribbon Schools Advisory Committee. They will be happy to assist you to the degree their schedules permit.

Also, please feel free to contact Ms. Joni Lindeman in the Office of School Improvement at 517-373-4213 or via email at LindemanJ@michigan.gov for further assistance.